

Garrett County Public Schools

REOPENING AND RECOVERY PLAN FALL 2021

Planning for a safe return to in-person instruction for GCPS students and staff



A special note to all stakeholders:



This draft Reopening & Recovery Plan is still under development. GCPS is still processing and analyzing stakeholder feedback specific to the plan as well as monitoring the COVID 19 safety protocol guidance. Subsequently, work is ongoing for several components of the plan. Also, it is very important to recognize that this plan may need to be adjusted based on our local COVID 19 metrics and the most current guidance from the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the Maryland State Governor, Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), Maryland Department of Health (MDH), and Garrett County Health Department (GCHD).

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1

INTRODUCTION

GCPS is dedicated to providing the public with a reopening plan in regards to the following categories below.

2

ACCESS AND EQUITY

GCPS is dedicated to providing equitable services to all students, regardless of their disability, in compliance with IDEA, Section 504, and Title II.

6

COMMUNICATION

GCPS is dedicated to consulting with a wide variety of stakeholders, in regards to the reopening plan, and updating information at least every 6 months.

7

RECOVERY EFFORTS

GCPS is dedicated to evaluating instructional needs, planning instruction based on state standards, and ensuring continuity of learning for all students.

16

SAFETY PROTOCOLS

GCPS is dedicated to implementing health and safety protocols that are informed by the Center for Disease Control (CDC), Maryland Health Department (MHD) and the Garrett County Health Department (GCHD).

18

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

GCPS is dedicated to answering public questions in regards to the Reopening and Recovery Plan.

INTRODUCTION

Garrett County Public Schools (GCPS) recognizes that this past school year was challenging for our students, staff, and community due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In order to prepare for all the needs upon the return in the fall, GCPS has created our Reopening and Recovery Plan, which focuses on planning for a safe return to in-person instruction with an established continuity of learning plan.

The GCPS Reopening and Recovery plan emphasizes how the school system will ensure continuity of services, including but not limited to services to address students' academic needs and students' and staff's social, emotional, mental health, and other needs. The plan also incorporates how the school system will maintain the health and safety of students, educators, and school system staff.

GCPS values the input of students, staff, administrators, and community members in the development of the Reopening and Recovery Plan. GCPS will continue to receive stakeholder feedback throughout the duration of the plan and update any areas as needed.

In order to meet the unique needs of all stakeholders, GCPS will adopt the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) model to ensure a comprehensive approach that meets the needs of students. The 10 components are:

- Physical education and physical activity
- Nutrition environment and services
- Health education
- Social and emotional climate
- Physical environment
- Health services
- Counseling, psychological and social services
- Employee wellness
- Community involvement
- Family engagement

These components are embedded within all areas of the Reopening and Recovery Plan and will remain a priority for moving GCPS forward.



ACCESS AND EQUITY

Garrett County Public Schools (GCPS) is committed to returning all students back to in-person learning this fall.

GCPS will provide full in-person instruction five days a week.

Based on data, GCPS does not intend to provide a virtual option.

GCPS will provide full access to campuses and facilities.

GCPS will implement normal school operating hours and schedules.



EQUITY

Ensuring educational equity remains a central focus for Garrett County Public Schools as we welcome all students back to full in-person learning. As such GCPS will:

- Ensure a welcoming and inclusive environment focused on engaging relationships for all students
- Recognize the diverse experiences students have had throughout the pandemic
- Identify and respond to specific student needs by ensuring appropriate classroom support, intervention, and recovery programs for all students
- Recognize the social-emotional needs of students and provide appropriate support to all students as an essential component of learning
- Embrace differences amongst students and our community as assets that strengthen learning experiences
- Welcome and engage families as essential partners in their child's learning
- Provide all students with access to the resources they need to reach high levels of learning
- Utilize evidence-based interventions and resources to deliver high-quality instruction to all students while providing differentiated learning opportunities specific to identified student needs
- Focus on moving students forward with grade-level instruction while quickly identifying and addressing learning gaps with appropriate support
- Ensure that extended learning opportunities such as tutoring, after school programs, and summer programs meet the needs of the whole child

ACCESS AND EQUITY (cont.)

GCPS is committed to the delivery of effective special education programs and services provided to students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment.



Special Education

All students must have available to them a free, appropriate public education (FAPE) designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for employment, post-secondary education, and independent living.

GCPS will ensure:

- Children who are in need of special education and related services are identified, located, and evaluated in compliance with the Child Find Process.
- Students qualifying for the Infants and Toddlers (I&T) program will continue to receive services in the natural environment.
- All students eligible for services will have an appropriately developed IEP, including planning for emergency conditions.
- The determination for recovery/compensatory services will be ongoing throughout the 2021-22 school year.
- Secondary Transition remains a priority to focus on seamlessly transitioning students into a life of economic independence and meaningful participation in the community.
- Every effort will be made to return to in-person meetings. Depending on the space available for meetings, accommodations will be made to allow some members of the team to attend virtually.

For additional information about Special Education services, please visit <https://www.garrettcountyschools.org/special-education>.



ACCESS AND EQUITY (cont.)

Section 504

Garrett County Public Schools will continue to provide accommodations to students who receive services under Section 504. Garrett County Public Schools will provide a free, appropriate, public education (FAPE) to all students as we return to the traditional classroom learning environment. The following information has been shared with GCPS Administration and 504 Case Managers:

- Students will continue to receive services as outlined in their Section 504 Plans.
- Section 504 meetings are ongoing and every effort will be made to return to in-person meetings. Depending on the space available for meetings, accommodations may be made to allow some members of the team to attend virtually.
- Service providers will be permitted full access to campuses and facilities in order to meet student needs.
- Regular monitoring, reporting, etc. according to federal/state/local guidelines will resume accordingly.



English Language Learners (EL)

GCPS offers an EL program for students in grades kindergarten through grade 12. Students are identified as EL based on a home language survey and an English proficiency screening assessment. The goal of these services is to promote successful English language acquisition through concurrent language and content learning. The sections below offer a summary of the current approach to EL services employed by GCPS.

- EL instructors will continue to provide services to their assigned students on their caseload according to the student's English Learning Plan (ELP).
- The learning activities will continue to be designed to both challenge and support the EL student's individual needs.
- The EL instructors will collaborate with their student's content teachers to assist in modifying lessons/projects/activities/materials as needed.
- The EL instructor will also aid in monitoring their student's progress and evaluation as he/she advances through the curriculum.
- The annual assessment, the WIDA: ACCESS for ELs will be completed in winter/early spring during the open test window according to the state testing calendar. All students receiving EL services are expected to participate.
- Contact with families will continue to be ongoing as needed and communication will be in the family's native language.

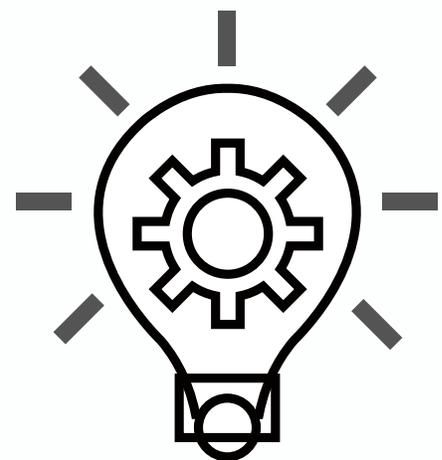
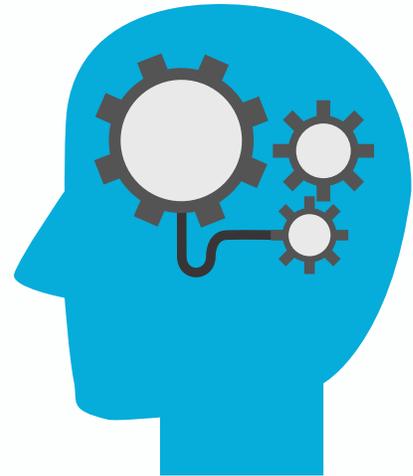
ACCESS AND EQUITY (cont.)



Gifted and Talented (GT)

GCPS offers a GT program for students in grades 3 through grade 12. Students are identified as GT by meeting a set of criteria including scores from the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT), Reading Lexile Level, Math Quantile Score, and scores from both the MCAP English Language Arts and Mathematics State Assessments. The goal of the GT program is to help students grow socially, emotionally, and academically while cultivating his/her fullest potential while constructing his/her own knowledge, and becoming successful lifelong learners. The GT program is designed to run differently among the various schools within Garrett County due to staff availability; however, the following are consistent:

- GT instructors will continue to provide services to their assigned students on their caseload according to the student's identified strength and/or talent.
- GT instructors will monitor their student's progress and evaluation as he/she advances through the curriculum.
- The continuation of differentiated instruction within the instructional bands in all secondary schools to maximize student potential: Merit (middle/high), Honors (middle/high), AP (high)
- The continuation of extension activities and enrichment programming in grades 3 - 5 as well as a focus on the William & Mary Literature Units to support ELA instruction in those grades.
- Continue to support teachers in grades K - 2 in Primary Talent Development with training/staff development in order to implement the modules with fidelity.



STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK & COMMUNICATION

GCPS is committed to communicating and engaging with stakeholders throughout this process. Subsequently, GCPS will:

Google Form Survey Data

Collect and analyze data from stakeholders specific to the reopening of school in the fall of 2021 and the use of the American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ARP ESSER) funding.

Draft Reopening and Recovery Plan

Post a draft Reopening and Recovery Plan on the GCPS website by July 30, 2021.

Public Input

Seek public input on the Draft Reopening and Recovery Plan along with any revisions taking such input into account.



Stakeholder Meetings

Establish a stakeholder group to periodically review and update the Reopening and Recovery Plan not less than every six months through September 30, 2024.

Ongoing Accessibility

Ensure the Reopening and Recovery Plan is accessible to all stakeholders.

Communication

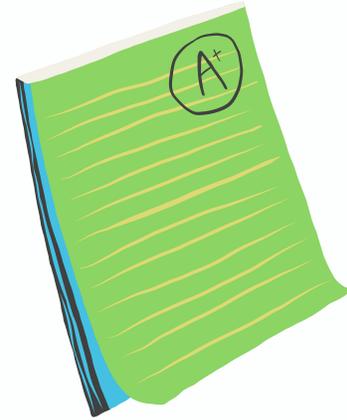
All communication regarding Garrett County Public Schools flows directly through the office of the Superintendent and the Manager of Communications office. Formal press releases specific to the GCPS Reopening and Recovery plan will be made accessible on the GCPS Website and social media venues. Press releases will also be sent to the local papers and radio stations. GCPS will also use School Messenger as an additional measure to communicate directly with parents. Individual schools will communicate with parents as appropriate throughout the reopening and recovery period.

Your
input is
valuable
in moving
GCPS
forward.



RECOVERY

Identifying Instructional Needs & Monitoring Student Progress



At the beginning of the 2021-2022 school year, GCPS will administer the following assessments to identify student learning gaps and monitor progress throughout the school year based on a student's grade level.

- i-Ready Math Universal Screener and Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Math Inventory Universal Screener
- Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Reading Inventory Universal Screener
- IMSE Orton Gillingham Baseline Assessment
- Phonological Awareness Skills Test (PAST)
- Independent Reading Level Assessment (IRLA)
- Arkansas Rapid Automatic Naming Screener
- Kindergarten Readiness Assessment
- Spring 2021 Administration of the Algebra 1 and ELA 10 Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program (MCAP)
- Fall 2021 Administration of Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program (MCAP)
- Grade level formative assessments

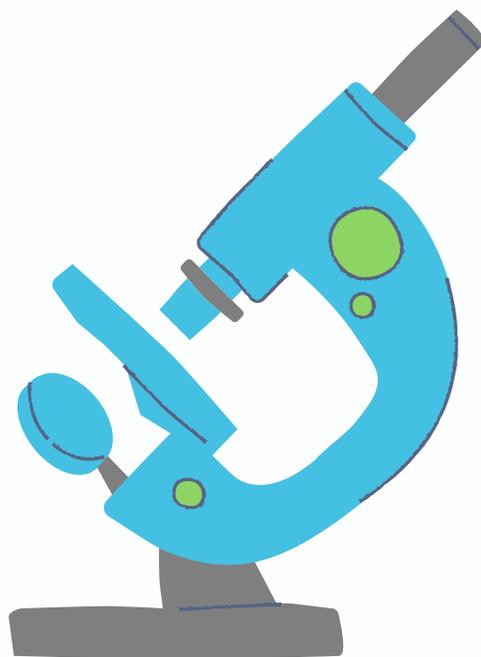
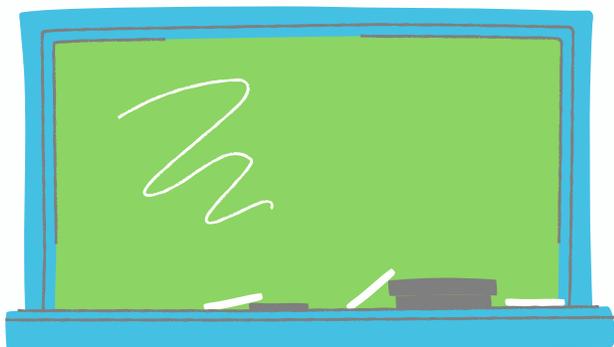


Results from the assessments above will provide teachers with critical information to guide grade-level instruction while quickly identifying and addressing learning gaps with appropriate instructional support. Additionally, these assessment results will allow schools to identify students with the greatest amount of learning loss as well as those most impacted by the COVID pandemic. This information along with other supporting data such as the level of engagement last school year, attendance, and course grades will be used to identify and prioritize supports to students such as tutoring, after-school programming, summer opportunities, and in-school intervention.

RECOVERY (cont.)

Intervention and Recovery Strategies

GCPS will implement a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) to provide instruction that meets each student's individual needs. This process begins with students receiving core grade-level instruction within the classroom. Teachers will utilize evidenced-based curriculum resources and strategies focused on grade-level instruction while appropriately differentiating instruction to ensure accessibility for all students. Using formative assessments and county direction specific to priority standards, teachers will be able to weave in any missed content standards or pre-requisite material necessary to access grade-level material for all students. Students who require additional instructional support to close learning gaps will receive supplemental interventions in small groups or individually based on their individual needs. Elementary schools will have two intervention/enrichment periods built into the regular schedule to provide necessary support while middle and high school will have one intervention/enrichment period.



Additionally, to support students transitioning into kindergarten, GCPS will be providing an additional adult in every kindergarten classroom to provide small group and individualized tutoring support from the beginning of the year through December. These individuals will attend two days of professional development in August specific to kindergarten readiness skills so they are prepared to work collaboratively with teachers in quickly identifying and closing gaps. GCPS, in collaboration with Garrett County Community Action, was also awarded a competitive grant through the Maryland State Department of Education to expand our Judy Centers. This opportunity will allow for increased instructional and parent family engagement support within our Judy Center service areas for students ages 0-5 as we work towards all students being ready for kindergarten.

RECOVERY (cont.)

Intervention and Recovery Strategies

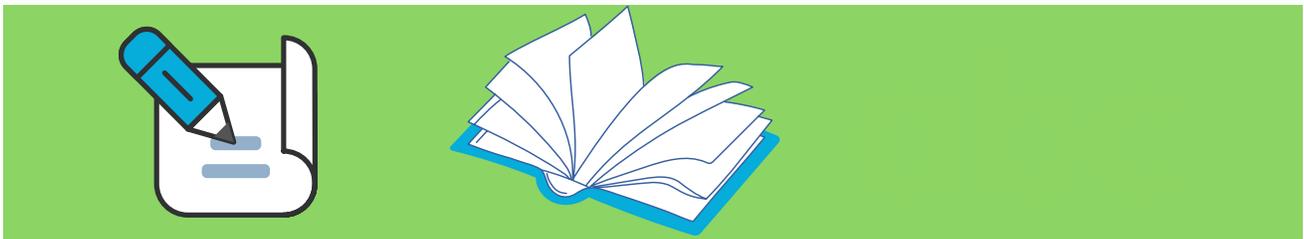
GCPS will utilize evidenced-based intervention programs or instructional strategies including but not limited to:

- iReady Math Suite
- Ascend Math
- ALEKS Math
- Haggerty Phonological Awareness Curriculum
- IMSE Orton Gillingham
- Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Read 180
- Houghton Mifflin Harcourt System 44
- Evidenced-based curriculum resources
- What Works Clearinghouse Instructional Strategies



Utilizing the MTSS process, identified students will be provided with the appropriate interventions during the regular school day. Other extended learning opportunities for students will include:

- Small-Group Tutoring
- After-School Programs (i.e. math academy, evening high school)
- Summer Programming



Teachers and administrators will work to identify and prioritize students in need of additional resources through the Professional Learning Community (PLC) process. Teams will meet regularly to analyze student data, identify students who need intervention based on essential skills, set goals, and monitor progress. Documentation will be kept through PLC minutes as well as in the PowerSchool Response to Intervention database.

RECOVERY (cont.)

Curriculum Development

GCPS will follow our most up-to-date curriculum frameworks aligned to the Maryland College and Career Readiness standards during the 2021-2022 school year.

Curriculum enhancements include:

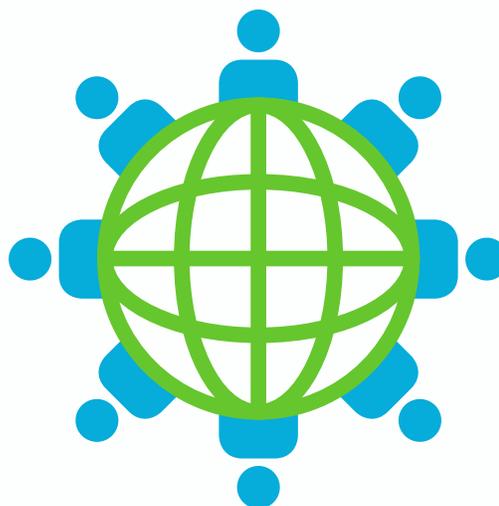
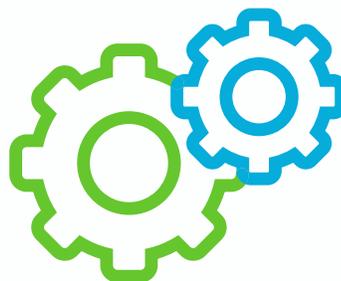
- GCPS will be implementing the i-Ready Math suite of instructional tools as an evidenced-based intervention program that identifies potential gaps, monitors individual progress, and provides teachers with math intervention tools beyond our core curriculum for grades K-8. i-Ready data will inform intervention and a personalized individual math instructional pathway for each student. Classroom teachers, intervention teachers, tutors, and administrators will have access to the i-Ready data and will monitor progress during the year.
- GCPS is in the process of writing an updated Science Scope and Sequence for grades K-5 in order to effectively return to hands-on activities, lab investigations, and performance-based tasks. Teacher leaders will be collaborating to write the updated sequence in late July 2021. The curriculum will highlight specific hands-on activities for each grade level that will be completed during the upcoming school year as we return to doing highly engaging science instruction.
- During the 2020-2021 school year, GCPS monitored the pacing and progress of our teachers working through our math curriculum as our schedule and mode of delivery went through a variety of changes. Teachers self-reported data on the completion of standards identified from our Math Scope and Sequence which focuses on our GCPS essential skills for grades K-8 and Algebra I. Based on this information, GCPS provided guidance regarding priority math standards for several grade levels, in the fourth quarter, as we returned to increased in-person learning opportunities. County-wide assessment data was collected on these priority standards. A summary of the standards data will be shared with teachers as we enter school for the 2021-2022 school year to help guide instruction. Priority math standards will again be shared regarding our core curriculum this fall. MSDE will conduct Fall 2021 testing that will provide a supporting source of standards-based data that will further drive priority standard selection.
- GCPS is in the process of writing and implementing the new social studies framework for grades 3-5, which will focus on learning how to read and write like a historian. Teacher leaders will be coming together in mid-August 2021 to develop an implementation plan for the coming year.
- GCPS will introduce foundational skills for phonological awareness in grades PK-1st.

RECOVERY (cont.)

Professional Development

GCPS is committed to supporting teachers with high-quality professional development opportunities to support instruction and recovery strategies. The following professional development opportunities are on the horizon:

- i-Ready Math Suite professional development
- Haggerty phonological awareness training
- American Reading Company (ARC) Reading Series
- Early Childhood LETRS training aligned to the Science of Reading for all Pre-K and Judy Center Teachers
- LETRS training aligned to the Science of Reading for all Kindergarten teachers
- LETRS training aligned to the Science of Reading for interested elementary teachers
- Social Studies Framework grades 3-5
- Science Scope and Sequence work grades K-5
- Secondary Science will develop plans for a safe return to hands-on activities and labs
- Secondary Math - Algebra 1 County-wide PLC
- Specially Designed Instruction (SDI)
- Implementation of teacher leaders in the area of mathematics at all grade levels to support curriculum development
- Utilize instructional coaches, teacher leaders, and principals to support program implementation with fidelity



RECOVERY (cont.)



Attendance

- The Center for Disease Control (2021) states that “students benefit from in-person learning, and safely returning to in-person instruction in Fall 2021 is a priority.” Subsequently, student attendance expectations will follow the guidelines listed in the GCPS Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook. [GCPS Student Handbook 2021-2022](#)
- If a student needs to quarantine or isolate due to being a close contact or testing positive for COVID, the school and the school’s nurse should be aware and the student’s attendance will be coded as excused due to a health exclusion. During those days absent, the school will provide work based on where the instruction is during the school year. Schools can provide this work through paper packets, books, online resources, Schoology, and other resources to help the student stay on track while absent from school.

Social Emotional Learning

- GCPS will utilize teachers and support staff to address the mental health and well-being of all students. Support staff includes School Counselors, School Social Workers, School Psychologists, Behavior Support Teachers, Coordinator of Mental Health, and the Administrator in Residency-Behavior Supervisor. All support staff are assigned to specific schools daily and will help, as needed when mental health needs arise.
- Social-Emotional curriculum and resources such as Second Step, Ripple Effects, and Teaching Social Skills to Youth will be used by teachers and support staff to address and teach to the whole student.
- Positive Behavior Supports and Interventions will be implemented in all schools.
- Individual and group counseling sessions will be provided by School Counselors, School Social Workers, and School Psychologists.
- Community/County partnerships will continue to play an important role in the mental health support in Garrett County Public Schools. (Examples: Garrett County Health Department, Departments of Juvenile and Social Services, Appalachian Crossroads, and the Dove Center).



RECOVERY (cont.)



Technology

Students will be provided with age-appropriate technology devices. Pre-kindergarten will be assigned touch screen tablets. Kindergarten - 4th grade will have touch screen Chromebook laptops. Fifth graders will have regular Chromebook laptops. These devices will stay at the school and be charged in the classroom, nightly. Middle school and high school students will receive regular Chromebook laptops, and those devices will be taken home and charged at the student's house, nightly.



Food Services

Breakfast and lunch will be supplied to students free of charge until June 30, 2022. Breakfast and lunch will be served at the schools each day. How and where students will eat meals will be determined by each school based on distancing requirements at that time. Hot meals will be served at school regardless of where meals will be consumed. Any after-school program will be offered free meals while students are on campus. We also hope to distribute seven days of snack and supper at the following locations: Finzel, Avilton, Swanton, Grantsville, Friendsville, Garrett College, Bloomington, Kitzmiller, Crellin, and Dennett Road. Final times and specific locations will be determined.



Health Services

- GCPS will ensure nursing coverage for each school as a measure to meet student and staff needs.
- GCPS will maintain health rooms and isolation areas at each school.
- Protocols for providing routine care and for ill students will be followed.
- Vaccination sites will be established so that staff at each school have access to COVID-19 vaccinations.
- Covid-19 vaccination clinics for appropriate-age students will be held at a central location at both the Northern end and Southern end prior to the start of the school year.

RECOVERY (cont.)



Athletics

Garrett County high school interscholastic sports will begin on Wednesday, August 11, in accordance with the MPSSAA calendar.

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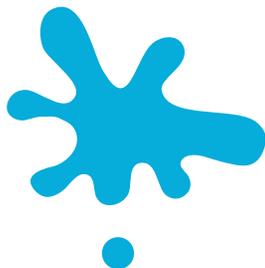
GCPS is planning to convene Fall sports in a "normal" fashion, following all state guidelines in place at the time.

2

Spectator capacity and event admissions will return to normal.

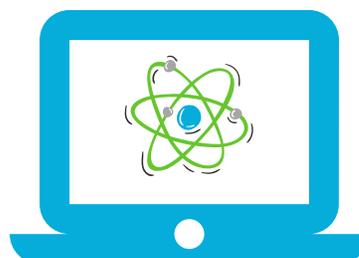
3

Anyone wishing to participate in extracurricular activities for Northern or Southern High Schools will need a current physical on file with the school's athletic trainer.



Extra-Curricular Activities

All other extracurricular activities will resume under normal operating conditions, as well. This includes, but is not limited to, band, chorus, robotics, JROTC, FFA, student council, etc, in relation to meetings/practices, travel, and competitions.



RECOVERY (cont.)

Garrett County Public Schools' Wellness Initiatives for Staff

Staff Wellness

Studies show that employees are more likely to be on the job and performing well when they are in optimal health. Garrett County Public Schools (GCPS) believes in creating a culture that enables employees to fully thrive in all aspects of their lives - physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual. Management recognizes the importance of cultivating a high-performing workforce by offering education, training, and incentives that enable employees to achieve optimal health and wellness.

We hope to accomplish this by building a supportive work environment that reinforces the links between positive wellbeing, strong performance, thriving relationships, and increased viability. GCPS employees have the opportunity to participate in wellness initiatives by completing biometric screenings and Real Age assessments, or by taking part in a non-medical option geared towards healthy habits. Benefits of implementing a wellness program include improved disease management/prevention and a healthier workforce in general, both of which contribute to lower health care costs.



The Wellness Initiatives program provides incentives to encourage employees to take preventative measures to reduce health insurance costs. In addition, the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) helps to identify and resolve personal concerns and provides additional support and resources to assist employees. Some strategies that have been implemented to promote and encourage positive staff wellness have been the following:

- Wellness Initiatives Programs
- Tobacco Cessation Program
- Diabetes Program
- COVID vaccination clinics
- Flu shots
- The Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

GCPS will follow the negotiated agreement articles specific to teleworking should any staff member be required to isolate or quarantine during the 21-22 school year,

SAFETY PROTOCOLS

In collaboration with the Garrett County Health Department and in alignment with current CDC guidelines, GCPS will adopt mitigation measures to minimize the spread of COVID 19.

Accordingly, Garrett County Public Schools will:

- Teach and reinforce hand washing and respiratory etiquette
- Provide screening and diagnostic testing through our nurses with parental consent
- Social distancing (3 ft) will be implemented to the greatest extent possible
- Ensure daily cleaning and disinfection of spaces
- Provide hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes throughout buildings
- Encourage students and staff to stay home when sick and get tested
- Provide and promote vaccination opportunities in collaboration with GCHD for eligible students and staff
- Continue contact tracing for infectious diseases and consult with GCHD to determine if other measures are needed
- Continued enhanced ventilation throughout the school system
- Post protocols for visitors at each school



of GCPS staff
have been
vaccinated.

The primary goal of Garrett County Public Schools is to have in-person learning five days a week for the entire school year following our regular schedule. At this time, GCPS strongly recommends that all students wear a face covering while at school. This is especially important for those who are unvaccinated. We further recommend that students and families take advantage of the COVID-19 vaccination opportunities. This is another factor that will help to ensure that all students and staff members can remain in school, 5 days per week, for full days. Appropriate accommodations will be made for children with disabilities with respect to all health and safety guidelines.

GCPS, in collaboration with the Garrett County Health Department, will monitor trends in school metrics as well as community transmission, vaccination coverage, screening and testing, and possible outbreaks to guide decisions utilizing layered prevention strategies. As such, the protocols above are fluid and may change based on our local metrics or state and federal regulations. A mitigating measure that could be implemented based on trends throughout the year is the proper wearing of masks.

SAFETY PROTOCOLS (cont.)

Transportation

In accordance with the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) and the Center for Disease Control federal order, all individuals on a school bus must wear a face mask.



The Center for Disease Control's (CDC) Order applies to all public transportation conveyances including school buses. Regardless of the mask policy at school, passengers and drivers must wear a mask on school buses, including on buses operated by public and private school systems, subject to the exclusions and exemptions in the CDC's Order. For example, if a student attends a school where mask use is not required due to vaccination status (e.g., a high school with a high rate of vaccination), the student is still required to wear a mask on the school bus.

GCPS will provide masks to those students who need them (including on buses). For example, students who forgot to bring their masks or students whose families are unable to afford them.

Safety Protocols (cont.)

Emergency Operations Contingency Plan

The Maryland State Board Resolution that was released this past spring stated, beginning with the opening of schools for the 2021-2022 school year, local boards of education must permit all students to attend school for at least 180 actual school days and a minimum of 1,080 school hours during a 10-month period for in-person, in-school instruction, with the teacher in the classroom. Any deviation from this will need State Board approval.

If circumstances require GCPS to deviate from in-person learning to virtual learning for an entire class, grade level, school, or the school system for a period of time, GCPS will:

Seek any necessary approvals from MSDE

Deploy laptops to elementary students. Secondary students will already have access to their school laptop.

Deploy hotspots to students without internet access at home

Deliver instruction via the Schoology Learning Platform and Google Meet Platform



Sample Schedules and Attendance Expectations are under development for the contingency plan but will be posted here soon.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Please access the link below to see frequently asked questions and responses.

[Click Here](#)

